

AMENDMENTS TO THE SPECIFICATION

Please replace paragraphs [0019]-[0020] with the following amended paragraphs:

[0019] As shown in Figure 2A, a bioabsorbable elongated band 1 of the present invention may have a first end 2, a second end 4, and a longitudinal, flexible body 3. Second end 4 may have a tapered surface 4a and include a needle 5. The flexible body 3 in this embodiment may be [[a]] molded from a bioabsorbable polymer component.

[0020] FIG. 2B shows another embodiment of a band of the present invention in which the band ~~body~~ 6 has been manufactured of bioabsorbable fibers through textile technology, such as knitting, weaving, braiding or some combination thereof. In this embodiment, the fibrous band 6 includes a first end 7, a longitudinal, flexible body 8, and a second end 9, which [[is]] has a tapered end 9a. Here again, the band 6 may include a needle 10 affixed to the tapered end 9a.

Please replace paragraph [0022] with the following amended paragraph:

[0022] In FIG. 2D an embodiment of the band 16 of the present invention is shown including a first end 17, comprising a stiff, strong and tough plate, combined with a flexible, fibrous body 18, and a second end 19 also comprising a plate. The second end 19 may be a tapered end 19a and have a needle 20 attached thereto.

Please replace paragraphs [0026]-[0027] with the following amended paragraphs:

[0026] FIG. 2H shows a band 36 comprising a first end 37, which may be a stiff and strong plate, a flexible body 38, and a second end 39, which may be a tapered end 39a and include a needle 40 attached thereto. In this embodiment, the first end 37 may be wider than the rest of the band 36.

[0027] FIG. 2I shows another embodiment of the band of the present invention. In this embodiment, the band 41 includes both first end 42 and second end 44, which may be stiff plates. In contrast, the body 43 may be flexible. Second end 44 has a tapered end 45 with a needle 46 attached thereto.

Please replace paragraph [0042] with the following amended paragraph:

[0042] FIG. 4D shows another embodiment of the present invention. Band 65 includes a flexible body 67 having high tensile strength ~~[[67]]~~, a first end 68, and second plate end 66. As is shown, second end 66 covers the sternotomy 48 and is attached to the sternum 47 with four fasteners 97 to 100, two on each side of the sternotomy 48, thus forming the first locking system. The second end 68 is attached to the sternum 47 with three fasteners 101 to 103, thus forming the second locking system.